

**FAIRBANKS METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

**City of Fairbanks, Council Chambers
800 Cushman Street, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701**

**Meeting Minutes
February 3, 2010**

1. Call to Order

Ms. Gardino called the meeting to order at 12:01 p.m.

2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

The following were present:

- * FMATS Policy Committee members
- ** FMATS Staff members
- *** FMATS Technical Committee members

NAME	REPRESENTING
*** Donna Gardino	FMATS Coordinator
*** Michael Wenstrup	FNSB Planning Commission
*** Jonathan Shambare	UAF
*** Jerry Woods	Tanana Chiefs Conference
*** Dave Sanches for	Michael Meeks (absent) Ft. Wainwright
*** Ethan Birkholz	DOT&PF
*** Bill Butler	City of North Pole
*** Bruce Carr (absent)	ARRC
*** Joan Hardesty	ADEC
*** Bernardo Hernandez	FNSB
*** Mike Schmetzer	City of Fairbanks
*** Bob Pristash	City of Fairbanks
*** Glenn Miller	FNSB
** Todd Boyce	FNSB
** Margaret Carpenter	DOT&PF
** Tara Callear	FMATS Planner
Gary Katsion	Kittleson & Associates
Phil Worth	Kittleson & Associates
Nick Foster	Kittleson & Associates (via phone)
Jeff Russell	DOT&PF
Dave Bloom	DOT&PF

3. Public Comment

NONE

4. Approval of the February 3, 2010 Agenda

- **Motion:** To approve the February 3, 2010 agenda, as amended. (Birkholz/Woods). None opposed. Approved.

Comments: Ms. Gardino requested that the agenda be rearranged to advance the LRTP discussion after the Van Horn Road action item.

5. Approval of the January 6, 2010 Minutes

- **Motion:** To approve the January 6, 2010 minutes. (Hernandez/Schmetzer) None opposed. Approved.

Comments: NONE

Mr. Shambare joined the meeting at 12:05

6. Committee Reports

a. Seasonal Mobility Task Force- Resolution

- **Motion:** To recommend to the Policy Committee to execute the resolution supporting the Seasonal Mobility Task Force Mobility Recommendations Report. (Birkholz/Wenstrup) None opposed. Approved.

Comments:

Mr. Hernandez said that he felt that the revised resolution addressed his concerns that he had voiced at the last meeting.

Mr. Schmetzer asked if the resolution was requesting a particular action. Ms. Gardino said no, that it is just a demonstration of support for the implementation of the recommendations.

Mr. Miller joined the meeting at 12:07

b. PM_{2.5} Subcommittee- Agreement Status

Ms. Gardino said that DEC has submitted their comments on the draft agreement and are awaiting comments from the FNSB and the DOT. Mr. Birkholz expected that the DOT&PF would have their comments complete by the end of the week.

Ms. Gardino suggested that the Subcommittee reconvene to discuss the comments.

Mr. Miller said he does not have specific issues, but he has forwarded it to the FNSB legal department to review. He does not anticipate any issues.

Ms. Gardino said that now would be a good time to be thinking about a list of CMAQ eligible PM_{2.5} projects, because once this agreement is in place, it will free up the available funds. Mr. Miller agreed.

7. Old Business

a. Van Horn Road PH 4 Increase

Mr. Jeff Russell explained that the funding would reimburse two change orders already executed. One was to add an additional detection unit to the intersection at Lathrop. The second was for dispute resolution regarding the embankment work. There was a bid item for "unclassified excavation" which was a lump sum item for \$107K. \$60K is the amount for the dispute resolution. It was in excess of the original bid and it therefore became a dispute.

Ms. Gardino asked when it was filed. Mr. Russell said that the contractor was done with his work in September 2008, and DOT did not see the value for the excavation until November 2008. At the end of 2009, they requested compensation. DOT could not come to a resolution so it then became a disputed item.

- **Motion:** To recommend approval of a PH4 increase in the amount of \$107,107.0 for the Van Horn Rehabilitation and Safety Improvements project. (Birkholz/Sanches) None opposed. Approved.

Comments:

Mr. Schmetzer asked if the centerline had been repaired. Mr. Russell said that it had been done with an infrared patch and it looks to be healed. Ms. Gardino estimated that it cost \$38K and FMATS paid for the repair.

b. LED Funding Increase

- **Motion:** To recommend adding \$15,000.0 of de-obligated funding to PH 2 of the FMATS LED Streetlight Conversion Project in Draft 2010-2013 TIP Amendment No. 1. (Schmetzer/Sanches) None opposed. Approved.

Comments:

Mr. Schmetzer said that this project has been delayed for three months and this has led to increased expenses to cover the time spent to address the issues that caused the delay.

Mr. Hernandez questioned what costs are involved with the design of the LED lights. Mr. Colp said that the design consists of configuring the retrofit. The challenges are the variations in the different street systems: spacing, pole heights, etc. Standards had to be developed for these varying systems. The technology is constantly evolving which makes this a moving target based on the changing manufacturer's specifications.

Mr. Schmetzer said Fairbanks is the first city in the country that has a standard for LED lights. This standard is for 20 mph roads or less. He said that the money could not be spent until a standard was developed.

Mr. Pristash said that the bids have been opened and is soon to be awarded.

Mr. Schmetzer added that possible electrical cost increases in the future necessitate this project. Without the cost savings, it would be difficult for the City of Fairbanks to afford the operating costs without this retrofit.

c. 2010-2013 TIP Amendment No.1

Ms. Gardino referenced a summary of the changes made and the comments received.

- **Motion:** : To recommend to the Policy Committee to approve FFY 2010 – 2013 TIP Amendment No. 1 as presented, with technical changes as required. (Birkholz/Sanches) None opposed. Approved.

Comments:

Mr. Schmetzer justified the change to the Curb Corner Project emphasizing the need for navigable sidewalks between the curb corners.

d. Bus Shelters Update

Mr. Birkholz said that there has been progress and the draft agreement should be sent to the FNSB by Friday.

e. UAF Tanana Loop – Alumni Drive Roundabout Project Score

Ms. Gardino said that the project score is 43.5 and it will not be added to the TIP at this time. It will be considered at the time of the next amendment due to conformity issues.

8. New Business

a. Long Range Transportation Plan- Alternatives Analysis Results and Solutions

Mr. Phil Worth from Kittleson & Associates led a presentation of the Analysis Results memo included in the meeting materials. The goal is to go through comments and discussion of the memo. The memo identifies a set of corridors that alternatives are being considered for. The consideration of the alternatives was guided by the goals and the themes developed earlier.

Steese Highway: Airport Way—Johansen Expressway

This corridor is seeing a 20% increase in volume during the study period. The crash rate is more than double the statewide average for a corridor of its type. The goals will be to improve capacity, safety and east/west connectivity, particularly for pedestrians and bicyclists.

There are projects addressing this in the 2005-2025 LRTP that are listed in the memo. These projects do not suffice in bringing this corridor to a satisfactory level of service. The additional suggestions are made in the memo. These are for consideration in the long term, however early consideration is in the interest of preserving the ROW.

Mr. Hernandez asked how, if pushed to the long-range of priorities, safety can be addressed in the near term. Mr. Worth explained that the capacity concern is what is being pushed to the long-range. He recommended a safety study be added to the LRTP for the short-range to identify geometric deficiencies that could address particular patterns of crashes. The study will reveal a range of other deficiency factors as well.

Airport Way: Richardson Highway – Peger Road

These recommendations were made to reconcile the differences between the Airport Way Reconnaissance Study and the Vision Fairbanks Downtown Revitalization Plan.

There is geographic overlap and the recommendations differ. The memo lists the differences and from an operational standpoint both are functional solutions, most impact access. For this reason, the differences will remain unresolved for the purpose of this LRTP update. There will be place holders for the purpose of attracting funding, and further studies will determine the definitive detail.

Ms. Gardino pointed out that the corridor should go clear to Sportsman's Way.

Steese Highway/ Johansen Expressway/ College Road Area

Rapid growth, principally retail/commercial area combined with a lack of road network presents a challenge in solving the congestion issues being experienced currently. The Old Steese Circulation Study is approaching conclusion and will have specific recommendations which will be incorporated into the next LRTP revision.

Mr. Bloom anticipates recommendations will be made in the next couple of months.

Ms. Gardino asked about the grade separation recommendation, which was made in the Steese Highway corridor section and listed for the long-range, and questioned if there wasn't the possibility of that project being considered as a short-range project as part of this corridor. Mr. Bloom responded that it is not the priority, but it will depend on where it is decided that the \$15 million in GO Bond money is spent. It depends if the City of Fairbanks were to decide to take on the maintenance. Ms. Gardino asked if it would require an LRTP Amendment and Conformity Determination if the project were to move from the long-range to the short-range priority. Mr. Worth suggested listing it as both to avoid this issue.

Mr. Worth explained that the very long range improvement is to affect more than just the Steese Johansen intersection as grade separated; rather looking at the entire segment as grade separated over several interchanges. He said there would be some change to the main line as well. And so as an entire project, having it in the very long range makes sense. But in the short-range, it makes sense to address some of the minor improvements at one or more intersections that either stay at-grade or integrate some element of grade separation. These feasible near-term improvements that should be moved into the short-range portion of the plan, while keeping it fiscally constrained.

Mr. Schmetzer commented that the fly-over ramp for Johansen traffic heading northbound on the Steese Highway would not have to be ripped out if it is designed right to accommodate the full, future intersection grade separated scenario.

Mr. Hernandez asked which suggested alternative is the preferred from a functional standpoint. Mr. Schmetzer answered that it could come down to cost. The fly-over ramp is estimated at \$12 million. The grade separation and the fly-over ramp are the two critical components of the solution.

Mr. Schmetzer added that the input from the City of Fairbanks Engineering Department is a mid-range project to widen the Old Steese.

Richardson Highway: Airport Way – North Pole

Mr. Worth noted that there is a long-term intent to allow this segment to operate in more of a freeway style, which would ultimately lead to grade separations of rail crossings and interchanges where there are currently at grade crossings.

There are places along the corridor that predict no volume changes and others that could expect to see as much as a 15% increase in volume. East of the Parks Highway is seeing the greatest change.

Most of the recommended improvements are aimed at this freeway style transition, over crossings and grade separations. Safety is another factor that will be addressed through many of the same recommendations through the reduction of conflict points.

The prioritization will be heavily dependent on available funding. Other considerations for prioritization would be the actions taken by the railroad, for example 3-Mile Railroad Crossing Overpass.

Mr. Butler asked about the Frontage Road concept as an alternative to an expensive overpass. Mr. Worth said it is a viable option that would come with the next level of study for the corridor.

Ms. Gardino asked how the Railroad Realignment and the Fairbanks to North Pole Bike Path will be addressed as part of this corridor. Mr. Worth said that the Bike Path will be discussed as part of this corridor and that it has strong community support. The questions remain as to how it would be funded and in what time frame.

Mr. Hernandez mentioned that the North Pole land use plan was adopted last week by the FNSB. It has a proposed trail crossing and he wondered if it had been integrated into the plan. Mr. Worth said it will be included.

Geist Road: University Avenue- Parks Highway

Mr. Worth indicated a 10% change in volume, a lesser projection than on other corridors. It has a crash rate that is nearly twice the average rate of similar facilities. The recommendations for improvements should address safety.

There are a few options for the long term 1) extending the expressway from the Johansen, or 2) the installation of the Boulevard Concept, as recommended in the 2005-2025 LRTP. It was agreed that the Boulevard Concept should remain the preferred recommendation in this LRTP update.

The 2005-2025 LRTP assumed other adjacent improvements to establish connections that do not exist today. These connections are intended to bring relief to this area. These connections would be responsible for the small increase in volume experienced along this corridor. It was also emphasized that the speed must be stepped down from the expressway (55 mph) down to the boulevard (30 mph).

Mr. Bloom said that this is being addressed to some degree in the DOT&PF safety project, but it is not an ideal situation. Speed displays will help to reinforce that motorists should be slowing to 40 mph as they approach the intersection.

Mr. Hernandez pointed out the concern for the high volume of pedestrians using this intersection.

Mr. Shambare asked about available ROW for the Boulevard Concept. Mr. Worth said that the recommendation would likely be to separate the pedestrian facility from the roadway and provide several safe crossing locations because of the numerous pedestrian generators.

Downtown Fairbanks

Mr. Worth noted that this section addresses how to incorporate the Vision Fairbanks Plan into the 2010-2035 LRTP. The analysis lists what projects are in the current LRTP. Also addressed are the conflicting recommendations between the Airport Way Reconnaissance Study and the Vision Fairbanks Plan.

Ms. Gardino noted that the Wendell Street Bridge Intersection project is not in the list of projects. This is part of the Vision Plan. This realignment is not included in the Wendell Street Bridge Replacement project. Mr. Worth asked if there is value in marrying the two projects. It was agreed that, based on timing and funding that the two should remain as separate projects.

Mr. Miller said that he has issues with the Vision Fairbanks Plan's recommendation to move the Transit Center. Ms. Callear asked if the recommendation was based on traffic patterns or volume. Mr. Miller said it was based on location and use. Mr. Schmetzer said that the transit center would ideally be at the core of the business district.

Mr. Hernandez spoke of the Vision Plan differentiating between its circulation plan and a land use plan components. He asked if the proposed Vision traffic circulation is affected by the current location of the transit center. Mr. Miller said that he does not think the intent in moving the center was to address traffic, rather land use patterns. He said he agrees with the concept, just he is not sure he could support the implementation as it relates to moving the transit center.

Mr. Worth said that an approach to melding the two may be to pulling out the recommendations out of the Vision Fairbanks plan and turning them into projects. Then take these projects and determine which are fully supported and deserve further study.

Mr. Wenstrup asked if perhaps the transit center relocation should be categorized as a "very long-range" project, suggesting that it is possible that the transit center will need to be relocated after 25 years time. If so, Ms. Gardino said, the project would need to either be listed in the Downtown corridor section or another section addressing transit.

Mr. Schmetzer asked if the LRTP would need to be revised if the Vision Plan were amended. Mr. Worth said that if a particular project based on a Vision recommendation were to be federally funded, it would have to be in the LRTP. Ms. Gardino noted that the one Vision related project currently in the TIP is state funded, which would therefore not require it to be in the LRTP. Ms. Callear suggested that a change to even a state funded project could affect the configuration of other recommended projects in the LRTP, possibly then requiring an amendment.

Mr. Worth said if a need is identified that needs federal funds the LRTP would need to be amended.

Ms. Gardino said that the roundabout at Illinois Street is still in the TIP titled Barnett Street Traffic Revisions as a potential federally funded project.

Mr. Hernandez said it is adopted by the FNSB in the Land Use plan.

Mr. Worth said that this still feels fluid enough that there is some time for consideration. He recommends taking what is in the Vision Fairbanks Plan and beginning to separate them into specific supported projects.

Mr. Hernandez asked what happens if a project is put in the LRTP that is not consistent with the Vision Fairbanks which is adopted as part of the FNSB Land Use Plan. Mr. Worth replied that the MPO must meet the expectations of the FHWA. They expect consistency between the MPO plans and other local plans. The challenge is to find a way to overcome the inconsistencies, which will be a political process. Mr. Worth said that this set of inconsistencies is not entirely uncommon. FHWA will look at the plan from the perspective of seeing if a reasonable effort has been made to overcome the inconsistencies. It is then up to the local agencies to come to an agreement or agree to disagree.

University Avenue: College Road- Mitchell Expressway

Mr. Worth indicated that growth is expected along the corridor. There has been interest in equipping it to better accommodate pedestrian and bicycle traffic along with the existing reconstruction project. The limitations of the constrained ROW make it difficult to meet all of the bike and pedestrian needs.

The recommendations are a less than ideal solution, but they make it more functional and meet many needs. One suggestion is to provide for a six-foot shoulder bicycle corridor. The question remains whether the responsible agencies feel comfortable signing this as a bike lane or shared facility at this width.

It is recommended that through this process a standard or a policy is established that will make such designated facilities consistent in the future. This makes it easier for developing maps that enable users to easily find safe routes.

It was questionable whether signage or striping would be appropriate. Ms. Gardino asked why not sign the bicycle or shared use facility. Mr. Bloom said that he does not know of such a standard anywhere in the state. Ms. Gardino asked if it could be done.

Mr. Bloom said it came down to a matter of volume and safety. The volume of pedestrians and bicyclists may not necessitate such signage.

Mr. Schmetzer commented about designated bike lanes pointing out that they are covered with snow most of the year.

Mr. Bloom made a point that there may not be a need for 8 foot sidewalks in Fairbanks because of lesser user volumes.

Mr. Worth recommended that if unable to treat both sides of the road with adequate facilities that there should be plans to cross the users safely to the other side. Mr. Bloom said that the west side will have 8 foot sidewalks. The other side could be as much as six but it will be obstructed by the occasional transmission pole.

Ms. Gardino repeated her question as to whether or not it was possible to do signage. Mr. Schmetzer responded stating that Anchorage uses shared use signage on many of its facilities. Ms. Callear asked what the standard width of the facility is. Ms. Schmetzer said that it is 8 feet.

Mr. Hernandez asked what the speed is. Mr. Bloom said forty.

College Road: University Avenue- Johansen Expressway

Mr. Worth said that there are three planned projects 1) rehabilitation, 2) ramp improvements at Johansen/College/Illinois and the 3) intersection at College, Antoinette Avenue and Margaret Avenue. An additional recommendation was made for a pedestrian/bike facility along College. Topographic challenges exist that make this financially unfeasible, so it is at best a very long consideration. In the near-term he recommended fixing the gaps in the facilities and providing safe crossings. Mr. Hernandez asked where the gap is. Mr. Worth said it is on the south side at Aurora Drive near the Fairgrounds.

Mr. Worth said that the larger project is not as beneficial from a cost benefit analysis perspective, when compared to other proposed bike/ped needs

Mitchell Expressway: University Avenue- Richardson Highway

Mr. Worth pointed out that the key concern here is what to do with the interchange at Peger Road. He recommended moving the project to the near term horizon due to safety issues.

He recommended signal timing as a near term improvement that could be made to improve safety, because it is low cost. If effective in improving safety, it could buy time to allow for something larger in scope to be developed for the corridor through the process. The signal timing could allow for more turning time for left turns which was a recurring comment from freight community.

Ms. Gardino asked Mr. Foster about crash data and how this project ranks in priority when compared to other streets with safety issues such as University or Lathrop. He said he would share this information once he finds it.

In terms of prioritization, Ms. Gardino pointed out that this is a truck route. Mr. Worth added to that point that if the pipeline were to be constructed this would increase the priority. Mr. Worth said that the timeframe will remain questionable.

Mr. Birkholz said that an important consideration may be that there is developable land there that could impact that intersection. Wal-Mart once considered moving into the area.

Phillips Field Road: Peger Road to Illinois Street

Mr. Worth said that the model does not forecast significant growth in volume for the corridor. He said it is an important link in system due to location, particularly its proximity to river on the north side and that it parallels other important roadways such as the Johansen Expressway and Airport Road. It is a truck route servicing industrial area, but also has an opportunity to service bicyclists and pedestrians. Commuters who choose to use this over higher volume and higher speed roadways also rely on this facility.

Factors to consider when analyzing this corridor are turning radii for trucks, good visibility along the corridor and facilities for bike/ped. Although it is not ideal to put bikes/peds with trucks, it remains a low volume and low speed facility which compliments this use.

Mr. Schmetzer asked if the Chena Riverfront or Festival Fairbanks Plans had been integrated into this corridor. They propose bike paths in this area. He suggested that if federal funds were to be used to construct these facilities that they should be included. Ms. Gardino said that they should get this to Kittleson.

South Cushman Street: Airport Way- Van Horn Road

Some changes in volume are expected along this corridor. It will be interesting to see how the near-term South Cushman improvements will affect this facility. It is likely that private investments will follow the implementation of the roadway improvements and could be a catalyst for further redevelopment in the area.

Tanana Lakes Recreation Area Access

This got a fair amount of discussion in the workshop and at the open house. There are two potential north/south connections and it is not necessary to choose at this point. Ensuring a connection is what is necessary. As more planning is done for the area, this will become clear. Lathrop is currently the primary entrance and it should be improved over time. Due to its recreational value, it is important that these facilities accommodate bikes/peds.

Ms. Gardino said that she emailed out the Existing Conditions and Needs Analysis. She requested the comments by Friday. A revision will be available once comments are received.

Mr. Worth said that new data will also be integrated into the Cambridge memo. He said that the next steps will be to put the funding package together and go through the prioritization process.

9. Public Comment Period

NONE

10. Other Issues

11. Informational Items

a. University Avenue Widening Project Briefing

Mr. Bloom said that DOT is pursuing ROW at this time. He said they are pursuing base maps for ROW which will be done by September or October and the acquisition of the partial takes will follow. DOT recently terminated the contract with the design consultant and DOT will continue the design in house. They have met with the utilities. There will be more public reviews. The DSR is the next milestone that they hope to have out in late summer. There will be more foundation drilling on the bridge because it is not known if it will be a complete replacement or not. It will likely be a complete replacement but traffic control is the challenge. They expect to obligate another \$7 million in ROW by the end of the year. Utility will be obligated in the following year, 2011. The design will be done before the ROW is secured.

Mr. Schmetzer asked about the plan for the driveway at the UAF campus at Geist. Mr. Bloom said it will be a signalized intersection with a dedicated left turn pocket.

Mr. Hernandez asked about how long it would take to reconstruct the bridge. Mr. Bloom said about one year. Incentives could speed up this process.

Ms. Gardino asked if all the ROW has to be acquired in order to begin construction on the first phase. Mr. Bloom said only that which is in the area of the first phase.

Mr. Schmetzer commented on the railroad crossing stating his concerns about the timing of the morning train and its impact on traffic. Ms. Gardino said that she made the comment at the AKRR Open House last week. She recommended putting this on the agenda for the next meeting for Mr. Carr to comment on.

b. Policy Committee Action Items from January 20, 2009

Ms. Gardino referenced the action items included in the packet for informational purposes.

c. Jobs for Main Street Act of 2010

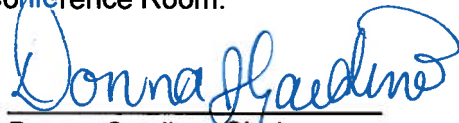
Ms. Gardino referenced the letter to Senator Begich that was included in the packet for informational purposes.

12. Adjourn

- **Motion to adjourn.** (Butler/Woods) None opposed. Approved. Meeting adjourned 2:12 pm.

The next scheduled Technical Committee Meeting is March 3, 2010, at Noon at City Hall, in the Engineering Conference Room.

Approved:



Donna Gardino, Chair
FMATS Technical Committee

Date:

